"A Word to Women," by "Madge," Englan[d]'s Foremost Authority on Etiquette.

SELECTIONS FROM THE BRIGHT SAYINGS IN MRS. C. E. HUMPHRY'S LATEST BOOK, "A WORD TO WOMEN," PUBLISHED BY M. F. MANSFIELD, NEW YORK.

The Cowardliness of Women.

Has any one ever met, in real life, the woman who screams and jumps on a chair at the sight of a mouse? I have never heard of her out of the servants' hall, where ladies' maids appear to carry on the traditions of sensibility kept up by their betters two or three generations since, when nerves, swoonings and burnt feathers played a prominent part in the lives of fashionable women.

A little mouse has nothing terrible about it, vermin though it be in strict classification. Now, if it had been a rat! Or a black beetle! A large, long-legged, rattling cockroach! Truly, these are awesome things, and even the strongest-minded of women hate the sight of them. Very few women, I take it, are afraid of mice.

But though we can watch with interest and amusement and a sort of kindly feeling the actions of a mouse, we are sad cowards all the same. Some of us are physically cowardly, though by no means all; but very few of us are morally brave. I heard a sermon not long ago on moral cowardice as shown in the home. And who shall deny that it is very, very difficult to obey the old dictum, "Fais ce que dois, advienne que pourra," and to deal faithfully with members of the home circle, from paterfamilias himself down to the little maid in the basement territory?

The fact is, we are cowards all, in face of any duty that threatens to affect the sunshiny atmosphere of home. We dread the clouds with a mortal fear, and are prone to sacrifice far more than we ought on the altar of peace and love. They are good and beautiful things, but they may be too dearly bought. And, above all, we must beware of indulging ourselves in them to the detriment of the best interests of others.

The Woman Who Lives for Dress.

Ninety out of every hundred women bury their minds alive. They do not live, they merely exist. After girlhood, with its fun and laughter and lightheartedness, they settle down into a sort of mental apathy, and satisfy themselves, as best they can, with superficialities—dress, for instance. There are thousands of women who live for dress. Without it the world for them would be an empty, barren place.

Dress fills their thoughts, is dearer to them than their children; yes, even dearer than their pet dogs! What could heaven itself offer to such a woman? She would be miserable where there were no shops, no chiffons. The shining raiment of the spiritual world would not attract her, for she could not differentiate her own from that of others

And when beauty goes, and the prime of life with its capacity for enjoyment is long over, what remains to her? Nothing but deadly dulness, the miserable apathy that seizes on the mind neglected.

The Beauties of Golden Silence.

The lesson of quiet composure has to be learned soon or late, and it is generally soon in the higher classes of society. In fact, the quality of reticence, and even stoicism, is so early implanted in the daughters of the cultivated classes that a rather trying monotony is sometimes the result. After a while the girls outgrow it, learning how to exercise the acquired habit of self-control without losing the charm of individuality.

When maturity is reached, one of the most useful and delightful of social qualities is sometimes attained—not always—that of silently passing over much that, if noticed, would make for discord. Truth to tell, there is often far too much talking going on.

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Sometimes a whole "snowball" of scandal is collected by some one starting the merest flake, so to speak. "I wonder if Mrs. Such-an-one is all right," is quite enough to set the matter going. The person to whom this remark has been made says to some one else, "Lady Blank thinks Mrs. Such-an-one is a bad lot," and still more color is given to the next remark, so that the simile of the snowball justifies itself. Is not this a case when silence proves itself to be golden indeed? And not only in the interests of charity is this so, but sometimes for reasons of pure policy as well.

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And is not silence golden in the home? If there is even one member who is kindly charitable, and who makes allowances for small failings, looking for the good in everybody and taking a lenient view of other people's shortcomings, the effect is surprising. The little leaven leaveneth the whole lump in time, and the "soft answer" becomes the fashion of the household.

A perfectly frightful amount of talking goes on in some families. Each member is picked to pieces, as it were; motives found for her conduct that would astonish her indeed if she heard them attributed to her, and her kindest an[d] ... dis-interested actions are distorted to suit the narrow minds o... those who are discussing her. Incapable of magnanimit... ns-late kindheartedness and sigle-mindedn... in their own pett... the r...

sionary among the heathen, to write books with great thoughts in them, to do noble deeds of tremendous self-sacrifice, to take up some great life work.

She looks so far afield that she cannot see the little duties lying to her hand, in the performance of which lies her best training for great and worthy deeds. Many a girl dreams of such an ideal as Florence Nightingale, and nevertheless shrieks and runs out of the room when her little brother cuts his hand with the carving knife. What a scared, helpless creature she would be in a hospital!

Another girl pictures herself a heroine of self-denial, giving up "all" for some one, while she is too lazy to run upstairs to fetch her mother's gloves. She is not "faithful in small things," though she fully intends to excel in great. The ideal daughter is the unselfish, active, intelligent and good-tempered girl who thinks out what she can do to help her mother, to make life pleasanter for her father, and home happier for her brothers.

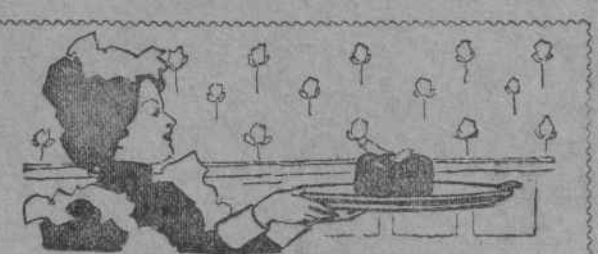
Many girls think self-culture the first and greatest duty of all, but in thinking so, and in acting on the thought, they turn their backs upon real self-culture. Doing something for others, when we would rather be doing something for ourselves, goes further toward self-culture, in its highest and best sense, than reading the cleverest book ever written, or practising the most difficult music.

The Out-of-Date Chaperon.

The old, strait-laced ideas about chaperons are now decidedly behind the times, and the parents and guardians who try to maintain them in all their rigid integrity will only find that the too-tightly-drawn bow will soon snap. Far better to accept changes as they come, taking the wide, enlarged view, and allowing the young creatures as much freedom of action as may be consistent with the social laws.

The old parallel of the hen-mother and the young ducks would come in most usefully here, were it not so hackneyed. But think what sad deprivations of the joie de vivre the ducks would have suffered had it been in the power of the hen to enforce her objections.

The Domestic Girl.



Do not for a moment imagine that the domestic girl cannot be smart. She can turn herself out as bewitchingly as anybody, and the same cleverness that goes into her delicious entrees, capital sauces, and truly lovely afternoon tea cakes concerns itself with the ripples of her coiffure, the correct tilt of her hat, and the deft fall of her skirt.

The domestic girl need be neither plain nor dowdy. Plenty of exercise and the feeling that she is of use in the world brighten her eyes, keep her complexion clear, and give her that air of lightheartedness that should, but does not always, characterize a girl. How middle-aged is the expression that some of them wear! Both boys and girls in their early twenties have occasionally this elderly look.

Of course, there is always the extreme domestic girl, who has not a soul above puddings, whose fingers show generally a trace of flour, and whose favorite light reading is recipes. She is well appreciated at meal times, that girl, but she is not the liveliest of companions. Like the German girl, who is trained to housewifery and little else from her earliest years, she has a dough-like heaviness about her when other topics are started. Then there is, of course, the girl at the other end of the scale.

The ideal domestic girl is she who combines with high culture a love of the domestic and a desire to please. This last should not be so excessive as to degenerate into vanity and conceit, but should be sufficiently powerful to induce its possessor to dress attractively, keep her pretty hair at its glossiest, and be as smart and neat and up-to-date in all matters pertaining to the toilet as any of her less useful sisters, besides cultivating those social graces that do so much to brighten life and sweeten it by making smooth the rough ways and rendering home intercourse as agreeable and pleasant as it should be. There are girls who keep all their prettiness for the outside world, and are anything but attractive within the home. They are by no means the ideal girls.

The Bachelor Girl.

The girl bachelor is often a comfortable creature. She can make a home out of the most unpromising materials. A dreary little flat, consisting of three tiny rooms, with a hall, have been known to be metamorphosed into a most inviting little nest by the exercise of taste and skill, and at a minimum of cost.

Two rooms on the second floor of a dull house in a bleak street have often been transformed by the same means into a cheery dwelling place. Much merry contriving goes to this result and serves to make, like quotations and patchwork, "our poverty our pride," and, indeed, there is a keen pleasure in the cutting of our coat according to our cloth, in making ends meet with just a little pulling, and in devising ways and means of adjusting our expenditure to the very limited contents of our exchequer.

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In many essentials the girl bachelor has the advantage of the ordinary young man. Hear what a contemporary has to say: "The average youth, from the time he leaves school, wants unlimited tobacco for his pipes and cigarettes, and often runs to several cigars a day; he seldom passes many hours without a glass of something—wine, spirits or beer, according to his tastes or company, and he wants a good deal of amusement of the sing song or cheap music hall kind, to say nothing of much more expensive meals.

"The girl has none of these expenses; she often economizes, and gives herself healthy exercise by walking at least part of the way to her occupation in fine weather; she does not smoke; she rarely eats or drinks between meals, though she may nibble a bit of chocolate, which, after all, is wholesome food; her midday meal seldom costs more than sixpence, and she is glad after working hours to get home, where she enjoys the welcome change of reading a book and making and mending her clothes, concocting a new hat, and so forth."

It is a healthy, happy, often a merry, cheery life, and if the girl bachelor often sighs to be rich, the wish is not allowed to generate discontent, but serves to arouse a wholesome ambition, which may lead, in time, to the realization of the wish.

And who so happy, then, as the matured and cultured woman who reaps where she has sown, and finds in the fullest development of her faculties the real meaning of the highest happiness—viz., living upward and outward to the whole height and breadth and depth of her innate possibilities.

The Pleasures of Woman's Middle Age.

In some lives middle age is far happier than youth, with its tumults, its restlessness, its perpetual effervescence, its endless emotions. Youth looked back upon from the vantage ground of middle age is as a railway journey compared with a Summer day's boating on a broad, calm river.

There was more excitement and enjoyment attached to the railway journey, but the serene and peaceful quiet of the present drifting and the gentle rowing are by no means to be despised.

When youth first departs a poignant regret is felt. So much that is delightful goes with it, especially for a woman. About thirty years of age, an unmarried woman feels that she has outlived her social raison d'etre, and the feeling is a bitter one, bringing with it almost a sense of shame, even guilt.

But ten years later this, in turn, has passed, and a fresh phase of experience is entered on. One has become hardened to the gradual waning of youth and the loss of whatever meed of attractiveness may have accompanied it. New interests spring up, especially for the married woman, with home and husband and children.

Youth is delightful, glorious, a splendid gift from the gods, but half realized while we have it, only fully appreciated when it is gone forever. But let no young creature imagine that all is gone when youth is gone! Sunsets have charms as well as sunrise, and incomparable as is "the wild freshness of morning," there is often a beautiful light in the late afternoon. The storm and stress are past, and the levels are reached, after the long climb to the uplands.

We still feel the bruises we sustained in the long ascent, but the activity of pain has passed, and we have learned the lesson of patience, and know by our own experience what youth can never be induced to believe—that time heals everything. We can cull the harvest of a quiet eye, and our hearts are at leisure from themselves.

Cheerfulness, and even brightness, replace the wild spirits of girlhood, and our interests, once bound within the narrow channel of a girl's hopes and wishes, and then broadening only sufficiently to take in the area of home, are now dispersed in a far wider life. Philanthropy finds thousands of recruits among middle-aged women, and many of such beginners rise to the rank of generals and commander-in-chief.

Three Ways for Women to Grow Old.

There are three ways of growing old. In two of them there lies a possibility of benefiting by the New Year's gifts of the old man with the scythe.

The best way is to face things and deliberately accept the situation, stepping out briskly to climb that steep bit of hill and enter the shadows that lie beyond the crest. It is a good time to be optimistic.

But there is a way of too freely submitting to grow old. A friend of mine sometimes says, "If you will insist on making yourself into a door mat you need not feel surprised if people wipe their boots on you." Quite so. Well, if we women lie down and regard friendly old Time as an inimical Juggernaut there is nothing to prevent us from sinking into dreary dowdiness, from wearing prunella shoes, and filling our husbands with the consternation that is inseparable from this elderly kind of footgear and false fronts.

We need not too literally accept the warnings of disinterested friends, who think we should be told that we "dress too young," or that the fashion of our coiffure is inappropriate to advancing years. Far better is it to dress too young than too old; to keep our heads in consonance with the coiffures of the day than to date ourselves in any conspicuous way.

The third way of growing old is to attempt to defy Time—regard him as an enemy to be thwarted, and endeavor to hide his detested ravages under a false array of cosmetics, dyes and other appliances. It is a despicable and silly way, but one cannot refuse a meed of compassion to those who practise it. They are generally women who have been beautiful, and it is so hard to let beauty go without an attempt to detain her. It is a great gift, and to lose it is, to those who have possessed it, a terrible thing.

But time gives us all something in return; a growing patience which brings sweetness and gentleness in its train; a wider outlook on the world and a deeper insight into the hearts of friends; a tender sympathy with those who suffer, and a truer sense of comradeship with our fellow-travellers on life's road.

And all these things write themselves clearly enough on the ageing faces, sometimes beautifying what once was almost destitute of charm and sometimes spiritualizing what once was beautiful in form and color, but lacked the loveliness that results from an equal balance of mind and heart.

The Cheerful, Light-Hearted Woman.

Men are always telling women that it is the duty of the less-burdened sex to meet their lords and masters with cheerful faces; and there is very little doubt to be felt as to the value of the acquirement—for cheerfulness often has to be acquired and cultivated like any other marketable accomplishment.

Well, 'tis our duty to be cheerful, and those of us that are lighthearted have no difficulty about it. The quality survives troubles of every sort, and lifts its possessor over many a Slough of Despond, into which the heavy-hearted would sink and be overwhelmed. And what a boon is lightheartedness when there is work to do!

...ICTION---QUEER NOVELS BY CHINESE NOVELISTS.

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SUN CHIEN, THE POWERFUL NOBLEMAN.

Not divining when my body must be laid to rest
I, who buried flowers for pity, men would laugh to scorn:
Soon the mourner, as the flowers, to the grave must be addressed.

Thus the Spring must waste away; thus the flowers are gone;
Nature's hues and human beauty perish one by one.
One brief morning's dream of Spring and beauty hastens to old age;
Failing flowers and dying mortals pass alike to the unknown.

One especially interesting fact about Chinese fiction is this: That it is comparatively modern, having been written during the last three dynasties. The events related in the semi-historic novels belong to the distant past, but the writers are late. The great masterpiece—"San Kuo Tzu" (History of the Three Kingdoms)—was written

TIAO CH'AN, THE BEAUTIFUL SLAVE GIRL, WHO PLAYED A DOUBLE PART.

during China's golden age of fiction, the Tang and Ming dynasties. This novel contains 120 long chapters, and, though attributed to Lokuan Chung, has several commentaries added to it. The story is semi-historical; that is, about as historical as the Waverley novels with ... may be compared. The events cover a century of time.

As Shakespeare borrowed facts form Hollingshead, so this author is indebted to an earlier, very dull work by Ch'en Hsou. For simplicity, force and fertility of imagination, it is unsurpassed in any language. While its diction is charged with the richest metaphor, it is chosen with great simplicity. The author is a writer brilliant and perspicuous as Macaulay, simple as John Bunyan.

The story opens with the fall of the Han dynasty. At the accession of the Emperor

TUNG CHO, THE USURPER.

Ling disorders break out at court and gloomy omens presage distress. The scene passes to the neighborhood of P'ing Yuen, in Shantung, where three mysterious brothers, possessors of magic powers, appear at the head of the rebel hordes, gathering in great numbers. The monarch is feeble, his empire is ruled by eunuchs, but speeding through the kingdom are requisitions for volunteers to oppose the "Yellow Cap" rebels.

The spirit of loyalty is awakened, and now the heroes of the story, the three immortal brothers, appear on the scene. Liu Pei is of royal lineage, but poor and unknown. He is twenty-eight years of age as he stands sighing before the placard summoning loyal subjects to battle, and Ch'ang Fei's abrupt greeting falls on his ears: "If a big fellow like you will not help his country, why do you sigh so deeply?" They go to an inn, and while at their wine Kuan Yuin Ch'ang enters wheeling a barrow. They agree to risk all in upholding the house of Han.

Liu Pei is a dealer in shoes and plaiter of mats, Kuan Yuin Ch'ang a refugee, Ch'ang Fei a seller of wine and a butcher of pigs. The famous Covenant of the Peach Orchard is conceived in the happiest spirit of romance and forms one of the most striking of the many episodes of the book.

Here is the description of one of the heroes of China: "He stood nine feet in height and his beard was two feet long. His face was like a heavy date, and his lips as rouge. With eyes like the red phoenix and brows where silk worms might nestle, stern and lofty was his countenance, and his bearing awful and menacing."

Slowly and dubiously the three covenant-brothers rise to power. The author unrolls the panorama of events—Tung Cho's usurpation and the wiles of the maiden Tiao Ch'an, Lu Pu's masculine beauty and invincible skill in battle, Ts'ao Ts'at matchless in guile, kingly in statecraft, S... Chien strong and indomitable, the pite... state of the fugitive child ... through treachery and ... buscade, the ce... ring of buckler... bowstrings ... arrows.